

AN IRISH DRAMA

ENTITLED

THE • CURSE • OF • BALAGARED

Written by

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THE CURSE OF BALAGARED.

Written by Thomas P. Murphy, Ottawa, Ont.

In Balagared in the County of Wexford, Ireland, there lived two brothers by the name of Brown, John and Hunter. John the eldest was wealthy, he was an honest and industrious man. He gave a helping hand to the Insurgents. Hunter on the other hand was a gambler and a drunkard, he squandered his fortune on horse races, he was an officer of the English army and therefore he was down on his brother for helping the rebels. Hunter had two bosom friends in the persons of Squire White and his son Jake, they were also gamblers and many were the poor men they sent to their grave with their villainous treachery.

In 1797 the Squire and John Brown had a lawsuit over some land, John won the case by a just decision of the court; the squire was almost a ruined man after. One day he met Brown and insulted him, Brown in return gave him a sound thrashing. From that day the Squire swore vengeance against Brown and said he would have his life some day and well he kept his promise and killed poor Brown and his wife. John Brown and his wife were blessed with three children:—Nelly, Lary and Dolly. Nellie the eldest, was married to Lanty Murphy, the eldest son of Pat Murphy the wealthy Enniscorthy cattle dealer who had three sons and one daughter. Pat. Murphy was a man whom Hunter Brown detested. Brown tried by every foul means to ruin him, the most of Brown's bright guineas were won by Murphy at the races and to make matters worse, Hunter's only daughter, Rose, was in love with Larry Murphy, Pat's youngest son, the famous jockey, who, by his skillful riding, won many a well contested race from his intended father-in-law, and the winning of those races made him a desperate enemy of old Hunter who had promised his daughter to Jake White. Rose knew not of her father's promise to White; if she did she would have ignored it for she loved Larry Murphy with all the passion of her heart.

THE PLOT AND PROLOGUE.

IN THE YEAR 1798.

John Brown lived in a thatched cottage. On the east side of the house there was a lovely lawn surrounded by a hedge fence. In the centre of the lawn on the east side there was a gate over which two statues were erected, representing two Irish chieftains. During the troubled times one of them was stolen.

One beautiful night in summer Mrs. Brown was baking just outside the door leading to the lawn. She said, "Its nice and cool to work out here. Its most too warm to work in the house. Ever since Nellie married Lanty Murphy the house hasn't been so lively. But what is the use of complaining, Lanty is the broth of a boy, fit for Nellie if she were my daughter ten times over."

John Brown says: "Mollie, the war is over, and we're beat, but God knows I did what I could. I took my box of money up from where I had it. I was afraid the Whites might find it. If God spares me I'll have it in the Bank of Dublin to-morrow.

Mary—"John, honey, I don't like the idea of your taking that box up, for if the Whites knew it was in the house, they would rob us. God between us and harm, maybe it is our life, too."

John—"Don't fear, Mollie, they're feasting over their victory. It's too bad they ever lived to see it."

Mollie—"I wonder who stole the statue of the arch, John? I suppose it was the Whites."

John—"I wonder what is keeping Larry. I sent him down for Lanty and Nellie, till I give him the least I promised him."

Larry enters and says—"Lanty will be here in a minute; Nellie can't come, she ain't feeling well. Here's a piece of pike I found on the road. Maybe the poor soul that owns it is in heaven to-night. I'll keep it at all events for I am going down there abroad and might fall in with the Whites and have to use it.

Lanty Murphy enters and says—"God save all here." "God save you kindly," said they.

Larry goes out at the same time the two Whites enter the lawn, supporting Hunter Brown, who was beastly drunk. They put him laying alongside of the flower bed. They go to the door and listen to what is going on within. They say, in a whisper, "the box is ours or know for what."

John—"Here's the lease I promised Nellie. Tell your father I want him to come to Dublin with me till I bank this money."

Lanty—"I will that, and thank you kindly."

Mrs. Brown—"Is Nellie ill, Lant?"

Lanty—"She don't feel well, mother; she is uneasy about me, for I delayed along the road. She'll be over to see you to-morrow. Good night. She said, "God speed you, Lanty."

The two Whites enter—"Good night, Mr. and Mrs. Brown."

John Brown says—"What brings you here? I know it is for no good purpose, so take your leave."

Squire answers—"We came by orders of magistrate to make a general search for concealed weapons. I command you to tell what is concealed in that box."

John says—"I command you to leave my house."

The Squire says—"By heavens! I must be obeyed."

The Squire makes a grab at the box, and John Brown hits him. Jake White shoots. Mrs. Brown is shot as she jumps in to catch her husband. Jake shoots both dead. Squire tells the son to go get the authorities. Lanty Murphy and Larry Brown for the murder. Jake goes out. The Squire breaks the box open and takes the leaves out. "I'll put those in Hunter's pocket so suspicion will be laid on him also." He goes out into the lawn and puts them in Hunter's pocket. When Dolly Brown enters and sees her dead parents, she says: "My God! My father and mother are murdered." She runs out in the lawn shouting, when the Squire grabs her and pulls his dagger out and was just in the act of stabbing her when Larry comes along. He lets a shout, and on the impulse of the moment he stabs the Squire with the pike. "They have murdered father and mother," and with that she runs out of the lawn. Larry enters the house. "My God! it is too true, they're murdered. Whites, you hell-hounds, you did villainous work." He kneels down. "Father and mother, I know your sainted souls are in heaven to-night." "I'll swear by the heavens above your deaths will be avenged." "I'll examine them," he says. "They were shot." He goes over to the box: "Ah! this is the cause of it." He goes out and pulls the pike out of old White. He searches his pockets for the pistol and can't find any. "Ah! I can see through it now, its that devil of a son that done the shooting. I wouldn't wonder but he has the constables after me, and Lanty Murphy and I must leave immediately." He takes the box up and goes to the door. He says, "I can't go that way for the soldiers are coming." He goes to the gate of the lawn and sees them coming that way, too. He says, "My God! what am I to do?" He goes over to the dish where the flour is and puts some of it on his face. For the first time he recognizes his uncle. He takes his uncle's coat that was lying beside him and puts it on himself and hides the box in the hedge. He gets up on the pedestal and forms the second statue. Jake White enters with the soldiers. When he finds his father dead he goes mad with rage and carries his dead father out. Larry gets down and takes his box; he kisses his parents and bids them a long farewell.

The curtain goes down and Larry goes out till three scenes elapse.

RACE 'COURSE SCENE.

ACT I.

This scene consists of a fence about three feet high, across stage about eight feet from back curtain. The course is continued in rear of back curtain in same way, in curved form, as near like race course as possible. To enable the audience to witness race all round, the back curtain must be in two parts, being joined by a transparent gauze large enough to take in the view of course in rear, and to be so arranged as to be on a direct line with the course. To give effect to this, the front lights must be put out and a reflector thrown on the transparent part of curtain, which will show the horses in the distance, running on the course. The race can be continued as long as necessary, care being taken to turn on front lights as the race crosses stage in front, and to put them out and turn on reflector, when the horses are in the rear.

PRISON SCENE.

ACT III.

PRISONER—LARRY.

VISITOR—DOLLY.

An escape from the prison. Cell with bed cot, table and stool. Dolly visits Larry. She takes off her cloak and hat and lays them on the table, telling Larry to make use of them and escape, when the guard comes to let her out. The guard returns, Dolly falls in a faint. The guard stoops to pick her up, and the prisoner seizes cloak and hat and makes his escape along corridor. The guard starts in pursuit, but Dolly seizes him by coat tails and hangs on. He drags her along. Coat tails give way and she falls. Just then another guard rushes out and the two guards embrace and engage in tussle. While they are thus engaged Dolly rushes to the door and turns key, thus locking up the two guards, and making good the escape of herself and the prisoner.

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